

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013

SUBJECT: PER - Alternative Dispute Resolution

OCT 10 2002

TO: All NRCS Employees

File Code: 360

November 2002 will mark 2 years since the inception of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program.

ADR provides all NRCS employees, customers, and partners with a non-adversarial alternative to the traditional complaint, grievance, and appeal systems. It is an early-intervention program that uses neutral third parties to assist in resolving disputes. ADR is confidential, voluntary, informal, cost-effective, and faster than traditional methods. Unlike litigation, ADR helps maintain a strong relationship among employees, customers, and partners.

The ADR Program has achieved numerous successes—namely the early intervention and resolution of workplace disputes, plus a number of administrative grievances, equal employment opportunity complaints, and program-related disputes have been resolved.

I fully support this neutral approach to workplace and program-related disputes. We have a solid foundation and I expect our resolution success to continue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce I. Knight", is written over the printed name and title.

BRUCE I. KNIGHT
Chief